

Post Fellowship Reporting - Project Summary

Report Title: Teachers as Writers Name: Lisa Frase

Other Team Andrea Plato

Members:

Program: Greater Houston Area Program

Trip Dates: 11/30/-0001 - 11/30/-0001 Location Visited: Chautauqua, New York

Post Fellowship Reporting Template: PFR Template 01

Project Summary: Nestled in Upstate, New York, Chautauqua is a utopic environment, a cultural theme park for higher education, enlightenment, and creativity. The bricked lined Victorian setting was the host for the Highlights Foundation Writer's Workshop. We traveled by plane, and then by shuttle, and spent the rest of the week walking through this gated community from one writer's workshop to another. Each year, children's writers flock to Chautauqua to soak in the intensive writing curriculum presented by editors and successful children's authors. We were blessed to meet Newbery award winning author Jerry Spinelli and his wife, also an award winning author, Eileen. They were apart of the faculty, but they were also there as learners. We also met a number of teachers and librarians who love children, children's literature, and choose to write for children. The community of attendants spent a week writing and thinking together. Each day we attended several workshops on specific writing topics. We spent time with personal mentors evaluating our own writing. We had rich discussions with other educators about applying our learning in the classroom. Our energy was renewed and our hearts full when we left the experience of a lifetime. For us, Chautauqua was the equivalent of chocolate overload cake. Rich. Decadent. Exhausting. And worth every minute. We hope we've brought a little bit of Chautauqua back to our classrooms. We strive to create a similar environment in our classrooms to help build a community of writers in progress.

Career Impact: *Provided us with the opportunity to learn the writing process from master writers, editors, and educators.

- *Exposed us to a variety of writing genres, techniques, and ideas on writing that we are able to share with our students.
- *Gained a new, in-depth understanding of the revision process and how to apply it to our own writing as well as teach revision to our students.
- *Established relationships with writers, editors, and educators.
- *Motivated us to spend more of our personal time writing and to pursue publication.
- *Renewed our love of writing, learning, and teaching.
- *Generated innovative ideas to apply in our classrooms.

Classroom/Community Impact:*One week after attending the conference in Chautauqua, we presented to a group of teachers at our districts literacy conference on the things we learned about writing and how we planned to implement our learning.

- *We began implementing what we learned as writers with our young writers on the first day of school. We continue to share our experiences, new found knowledge, and mentor texts with our students on a daily basis.
- *We have shared books, mentor texts, notes, ideas, and newly created teaching resources with our fellow writing teachers.

Open Response: *Andrea is planning a Science fiction / Fantasy unit based on workshops she attended at Chautaugua.

- *Lisa is planning a "Writing Boot Camp" Chautauqua style for all of the fourth graders at her school prior to the state writing test.
- *Andrea is planning a mini course on humorous writing for her gifted and talented students.
- *We are using mentor texts recommended by presenters to teach students how to analyze writing techniques and apply the ideas to their own writing.
- *We are planning our fiction writing units with more insight, depth, and knowledge. We will implement our fiction units as they appear on our curriculum timelines.

Quote: "Reading is incredibly important to me as a writer. I learned to write through reading. I learned through reading. It just seeped through my bones." Eileen Spinelli, children's author and Highlights Foundation faculty member

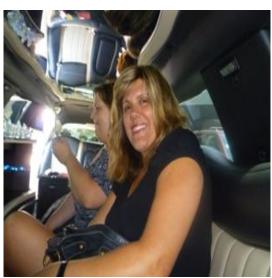
Photos:



Andrea reflecting on her day



A presentation by authors Jerry and Eileen Spinelli



On our way to Chautauqua



Lisa revising her manuscript



Lisa visited with authors Jerry and Eileen Spinelli



Andrea with her writing mentor



Andrea talking to faculty member



Lisa and Andrea spent time working and learning with fellow educators / writers